

THE MAY MAGAZINES.

"OLD AND NEW." The May number of Old and New presents the following table of contents:—"Old and New;" "Looking Back Across the War-gulf," Robert Dale Owen; "Crimean Captives," N. Noyes; "Now a True Story," "A Blameless Life," "No more Sea," J. W. Chadwick; "Christ the Life," C. C. Everett; "Nature in Art," "She Writes" (Chapters V and VI); "Catholicism and Protestantism," J. B. Torricelli; "Riding Down," Nora Perry; "Hill-top," William T. Brigham; "The Mormon Problem," Charles T. Brigham; "The Tartar Legends," J. P. Lesley; "The Organist," F. Townsend; "Ten Times One is Ten," Colonel Frederic Ingham; "Religion in Schools," by a Practical Teacher; "Up Garret," "Authority in Religion," Orville Dewey; "Grass and Roses," J. F. Clarke; "The Examiner;" "Record of Progress."

From Mr. Brigham's article entitled "The Mormon Problem" we take the following:—"The force of public opinion must be taken into account as another unfavorable influence for the Mormon future. Intercourse with Gentiles has already revealed to many of the Mormons the fact that their system has no sympathy outside of their own community, that the civilized world is against them, and that they are classed with Pariahs and lepers. They hear flatteries, it is true, flatteries from politicians, from tradesmen, and from doctors of divinity; but they are learning that these flatteries are insincere, and that beneath this smooth talk there is real disgust and aversion. The gracious doctor who praises them from their platform holds them up to scorn and horror in the pages of his book. The leaders know, and the people feel, that a more positive public opinion is missing itself against them in all parts of the Gentile world, that there is a rising cry everywhere that this state of things in Utah must cease, this tyranny be crushed, even if the community be broken up in the process. They know that the impression of nearly all these tourists who visit them is unfavorable, that these tourists are almost ashamed to excuse the iniquities which they see, or to plead in abatement the good work which has been wrought by a people so degraded. They see that the American people are consenting that the Mormons shall be called "whited sepulchres," and allow the phrase as not a whit too severe. No one can stay for a day or two, even in Salt Lake City, without discovering in the conversation of prominent Mormons this keen sense of an adverse public opinion, and with this an evident wish to make the most favorable impression. They are no longer careless what the Gentiles think of them, but have become very sensitive to criticism. They feel that they are not out of the world, as they have been in the years past, but in the world, and subject to its influences. And they see that in spite of all that they do, the opinion of the world is more and more against them. That the institution of polygamy is weakness to the Mormon community is not yet admitted by the leaders in their public discourse. On the contrary, they pretend to glory in it. We may believe, however, from many indications, that they are tired of it, are aware of the trouble it brings upon them, and would get rid of it if they could. It is reported that Brigham Young and some of its elders are even now seeking a place in Arizona, or in the farther wilderness, where they may send such of their people as hold to polygamy. If it comes to the alternative, the abandonment of polygamy or the annihilation of the State, they will let polygamy go—so one of their elders has recently said in a discourse in Chicago. But the custom has existed so long, and has been defended by so many arguments, that it cannot be abandoned without discarding the good sense and the honor of the teachers who have defended it. To give it up is to deny what has been preached for these many years as the special grace of God to the people, a peculiar blessing and privilege of the saints, part of the revealed will of the Great Father. Even if polygamy should be abolished by a new revelation, superseding all former revelations, it will still leave its curse in the confusion of family ties and family rights which will outlast the custom. Its blight will be felt long after it is abolished, and the blinded women who now defend it will mourn as its victims. It is borne as a cross by many of them now, and there is probably not a woman in the Territory whose heart is really reconciled to it, or who would not be glad to be the single wife of her husband. Even if Mr. Cotton's bill should be enforced as law, and all plurality of wives be treated as concubinage, the evil fruits of the system will not cease to show themselves, and the Church will suffer from the falsehood which it so long supported.

FLORENCE.

The Italian Capital—Scenes in and Around the City. A correspondent of the New York Times writes as follows from Florence:—"I have not for some time spoken of the changes and improvements which have for several years been going on and working a great transformation in the general aspect of Florence. Five or six years ago a company of foreign capitalists made a contract with the municipal authority to execute work of various kinds, such as laying out new streets and erecting buildings, and doing what is to contribute much to the convenience and ornament of the city. It is a period of not less than five and twenty years was allowed for the full execution of all the work laid out. One of the first things to be done was to throw down the old walls, which were originally built to serve both for defense and for the collection of the *Ostroi* duties, upon which most Continental cities depend for the payment of their local expenses. The walls of Florence, of various epochs, were built with the solidity which excites our admiration for so much of the construction of the old time; but for defense these works would be found a frail barrier to the destructive military engines invented in our day. For more than one half of the circuit the walls of Florence have utterly disappeared. They had historic associations, and with their frequent low towers were picturesque, and had an interest almost dear to those who had for many years walked in their shadows. They screened from the winter winds, or shut out with their cool vault the hot sunshine of summer. By good fortune only those on the side of the city built on the plain are disturbed, while those more ancient, with their towers and rich brown tints, which follow the Hill of Boboli, will remain. Except the curious old gateways, nothing is left to mark the line of the walls destroyed. The bulwarks, laid out on their site, as broad and irregular in their circuit as those of Paris, will, however, always serve to indicate where they stood. Along the new avenues, a good many large, handsome structures have been completed in

the past two years, and others are rising. They have the broad openings and ample height of stories which belong to Italian construction more than to the buildings in colder northern countries. The walls have an almost castellated solidity, fit to stand until the pick of the workmen of five or ten centuries hence shall split them to pieces. There is a good deal yet to be done, but perhaps in no city have the houses and shops been more improved than have those of Florence in the past three years. The old pavement of the streets, certainly good enough for any city, has been removed, and the roadway has the smooth uniformity of sidewalks of out stone. Whoever wishes to see the last trace of the fine old Etruscan pavement must come soon. The royal road, winding for three miles over the hills on the south side of the city, upon which work has been in progress for three years, will be completed this season through its whole length. From this extended terrace, or shelf, a dozen of the finest views of Florence, each varying from the other, may be had. At different elevations several rests or landings are spread out into broad squares, a name adopted from our language for the new breathing-places, the most of which happen to be not very unhappy contrasts, to be named. On the height of San Miniato, with a great amount of excavating and walling, and the sweeping away of old structures, a vast balcony, spread out over four or five acres, has been formed. The hanging gardens of Babylon were in our childhood objects of curiosity to the imagination, principally on account of the difficulty of conceiving of any solid object above to which they could be hung. But like the new terrace, which is to be such an ornament to Florence, they were probably sustained on arches or perpendicular walls. From this magnificent level, of all the views of this city which made Florence the "fairest city of the earth" to the poet, this will be the finest. The Val d'Arno for thirty miles is before the eye, and hundreds of villas and castles, many of them objects of beauty, and some of historic renown, fill the broad fertile plain. The habitations of a population of three or four hundred thousand are within reach of the eye. Should Florence, with its new growth, ever have half the number of inhabitants of the French metropolis, from this point will be presented an imposing show of beauty, of art and nature combined, which it would be worth while to travel some distance to see. Whatever concerns these old cities interests every one of feeling and intelligence who has already made a visit or expects some time to come here. These cities belong to history, and thus to the world. So much of the poetry, the romance, and the art of the past, interwoven with our actual enjoyments and the knowledge which we have got from books, here has found a great theatre for development, and not in a space measured by a few generations of human lives, but many centuries of time. As long as we are capable of dwelling with pleasure upon the achievements of those who have gone before us, these monuments will be as much ours, by a sentimental attachment, as the property of those now inhabiting the country, by the genius and courage of whose ancestors they were raised.

FRANCE.

The Plebiscite and its History. From the Liverpool Journal, April 13. The Emperor of the French is about once more to appeal to universal suffrage. In 1848, in 1851, and in 1852 twice, universal suffrage has served Louis Napoleon. He is going to try it yet a fifth time. Article thirty-two of the Constitution of the 14th of January, 1852, which, with the modifications of various *Senatus Consulto*, is the present Constitution of France, runs as follows:—"All modifications in the fundamental bases of the Constitution, such as they were laid down in the proclamation of the 2d of December (1851), and adopted by the French people, shall be submitted to universal suffrage." This appeal to universal suffrage is known in France as a *plebiscite*, from the Latin compound word *plebis-scitum* or *plebiscitum*—a law made by the common consent of the people, without the intervention of the Senate or of the legislative power. The article referred to occurs in chapter four of the Constitution, limiting and defining the powers of the Senate, by which the special guardianship of the Constitution is committed to that body. Article twenty-seven, for instance, says that the Senate regulates by a *Senatus Consultum* "all that has not been provided by the Constitution, and which is necessary for its march," and "the sense of the articles of the Constitution which give rise to different interpretations."

The fondness of the Emperor for the *plebiscite* may be very easily accounted for. By this process he and his uncle got all they ever acquired of supreme power in France. What his special object in the present appeal may be is not on the surface, but it may be mentioned that the name of M. Rouher, regarded as the Mephisto of the present situation, is at the foot of the Constitution of 1852, and perhaps he, too, has constitutional scruples. What if the vote should be less than the votes of 1848, of 1851, and of 1852? What if the vote should be adverse? Such considerations do not enter into the theory of *plebiscites*. Since the execution of Louis XVI there have been several appeals to the *plebiscite* in France on constitutional points. The first was on the constitution of 1793, when the Mountain party, having finally conquered the Girondists in the Convention, set about the completion of the constitution which the Girondists had begun to call to be the handiwork of Condorcet. This constitution, which was filled up with a rapidity that contrasted with the slowness of the Girondists in elaborating constitutions, regulated the number of representatives in the National Convention, ordered annual elections and established trial by jury. This constitution was submitted to a *plebiscite*, and approved by 1,801,918 against 11,010 votes. The ardor of the convention in constitution building was, however, greater than its desire to put the constitution into effect. The constitution, so approved, was in fact never acted upon. Two years afterwards, subsequent to the death of Robespierre and the downfall of the Jacobins, the National Convention again applied itself to Constitution making. If employed upon the work that experienced hand Abbe Steyes, with Cambaceres and others; and on the 23d of June, 1795, there was submitted by Bussy D'Anglais a bran new Constitution. This Constitution created two chambers—the Council of Ancients (250) and the Council of the Five Hundred, who in their turn elected five persons called the Executive Directory, known as the French Directory. This Constitution also was submitted to a *plebiscite*, and approved by 1,057,280 votes against 49,357. More fortunate than the constitution of 1793, it did work. It endured for four years—till the famous eighteenth Brumaire which brought on the scene Napoleon Bonaparte, who made very short work of the Ancients, the Five Hundred, and the constitution. Napoleon, in

his turn, went to constitution building, and on the 10th November, 1799, produced his constitution, which provided, among other things, for the election of a Chief Consul and two assistant Consuls. This likewise was submitted to a *plebiscite*, and approved by 3,911,000 against 1569 votes. The Consuls appointed were Napoleon Bonaparte, Cambaceres, and Lebrun. Three years afterwards, in 1802, Napoleon was appointed Consul for the term of ten years; and a few months subsequently a *plebiscite* made him Consul for life, by 3,568,185 votes against 9074. Quickly upon the heels of the life Consul came, as we know, the hereditary empire in 1804, when again there was an appeal to a *plebiscite*, not on the point whether Napoleon should be Emperor, as has been often asserted, but with regard to the hereditary succession. The "yeas" to this question were 3,821,675 to 2599 "noes." Once more, in 1815, on the act additional as to the succession, there was a *plebiscite*. But the star of the Emperor had set; only 1,300,000 votes were cast in the affirmative, and but 4206 against. There is here a long gap in the history of *plebiscites* in France. Until the cousin of the great Emperor came upon the scene the *plebiscite* was allowed to rust. In 1848 a *plebiscite* gave the Presidency of the republic to Louis Napoleon by 6,048,872, against the million and odd votes cast for Cavaignac. In December, 1851, a *plebiscite* declared Louis Napoleon President for ten years, by 7,181,231 against 640,737 negative votes. In 1852 the present constitution was ratified by 7,473,431 votes to 641,351. In December of the same year a *plebiscite* ratified the *Senatus Consultum* establishing the empire by 7,828,189 votes against 253,145. We can hardly wonder that the Emperor is enamored of the plan which has done so much for him, and that he will make a struggle to retain the power to resort to it when necessary. A very considerable party in the Chambers is bent on destroying this power of the Emperor to keep himself outside of the Constitution. If the Emperor is equally determined to retain it France is just entered upon a constitutional struggle which in England we shall regard with interest, but with that equanimity and philosophy with which people are apt to view the troubles of others. In the meantime it is remembered that *Pion-Pion* only last September declared that *plebiscites* were shams.

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